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NEWSLETTER

104-1560

16 May 1996

Washington, DC

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR SOUTH TEXAS FINALISTS. Once again McAllen Memorial High School has placed in the top ten in the national finals of **We The People... The Citizen and the Constitution.**

The national competition held here in Washington concluded months of study and hard-won victories at congressional district and state levels. The first rounds of the competition took place on Saturday and Sunday, 27 and 28 April, with the top ten teams competing in the finals on Monday, April 29 on Capitol Hill. Students demonstrated their knowledge of the Constitution before simulated congressional committees made up of constitutional scholars, lawyers, journalists, and government leaders. The panel of judges tested the expertise of the classroom teams on six questions:

What are the philosophical and historical foundations of the American political system?

How did the Framers create the Constitution?

How did the values and principles embodied in the Constitution shape American institutions and practices?

How have the protections of the Bill of Rights been developed and expanded?

What rights does the Bill of Rights protect?

What are the roles of the citizen in American democracy?

As is evident from the above questions, the students needed to be very well prepared, have studied intensively, and possess a mastery of the Constitution and the Bill of Rights. For McAllen Memorial High School to place in the top ten is quite a triumph, and says a great deal about these accomplished young men and women. We are all very proud of you.

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ANGEL PLANES/MIRACLE FLIGHTS. While rare, there have been several instances during the years I have served in Congress when constituents have contacted me in need of medical care, but have not had the means to travel to where that care is available. Efforts have always been made to try, if possible, to be of assistance and to make arrangements.

Now I have learned of a new service which may be of great help to those who find themselves in need of such aid. It is an organization headquartered in Las Vegas, Nevada called Angel Planes/Miracle Flights. They transport children and adults with serious health problems to specialized treatment centers anywhere in the continental United States. There is never a cost to patients nor is there any limit on the number of flights they may request.

Angel Planes/Miracle Flights provides a very necessary service for children and adults when they are most vulnerable. When the need arises, this assistance may be the answer for you. If you would like additional information, please contact my Washington office.

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FDA APPROVES NEW USE FOR ULTRASOUND DEVICE. Last week I wrote how the FDA had proposed final mammography standards. This week I want to mention that the FDA has just approved a new use for an ultrasound breast imaging system that will help doctors determine whether a biopsy is needed when a lump is found.

This high definition imaging system will enable doctors to look at solid breast lumps and judge whether they are likely to be benign. Those which appear highly likely to be benign could be treated without biopsy.

The device was approved for use along with mammography and physical breast examination. The new use has the potential of reducing biopsies performed annually in the United States by up to 40 percent. Until now, biopsy has been done on nearly all such lumps.

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RYAN WHITE AGREEMENT. Last week both the House and the Senate adopted the conference report on S 641, the Ryan White CARE Act. A number of individuals had written in support of this legislation, and this will advise that as passed the measure authorizes through Fiscal Year 2000 the federal grant program to states and cities to treat and care for AIDS victims; adjusts the grant allocation formula to provide wider distribution of AIDS grants; and provides for mandatory testing of newborns for the HIV virus if voluntary testing does not result in a significant reduction in the incidence of AIDS in newborns.

The importance of passing this legislation cannot be overstated. There are over 5,000 children in American who have received an AIDS diagnosis. It is our collective social responsibility to provide for them as best we can, and this will do just that.

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